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ABSTRACT

This book examines ways parents can use their child's interests to develop positive reading attitudes, read aloud to their child, and select books for children--with the goal of developing life-long readers. The first chapter, Creating Interest and Positive Attitudes, discusses developing an early interest in reading, the "language story" approach, interest inventory, motivating positive attitudes, and steps for developing attitudes. The second chapter, The Value of Reading Aloud, addresses taking a conversational tone, good literature gives perspective, making reading aloud interactive, and choosing a book and doing it. The third chapter lists 46 read-aloud books for preschoolers, and over 200 read-aloud books for kindergarten through grade 6. The fourth chapter, Selecting Books for Children, discusses choice of books, books in specific areas of interest, books for different ages, and expanding children's interests. Based on the self-directed learner philosophy, this book and the others in the series provide: essential comprehension techniques; basic vocabulary and phonics skills; clear guidelines for efficient study; critical thinking frameworks; and activities that lead to becoming a self-directed learner. Each book in the series also provides quick answers to pressing learning problems; easy practice activities for basic skills; common language explanations; and step-by-step guidance to engage children in active learning. (RS)

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HELPING CHILDREN TO LEARN SERIES

Creating Life-Long Readers

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by Carl B. Smith

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A practical guide
for parents and tutors

by Carl B. Smith

ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English and Communication

&

The Family Learning Association

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Creating interest and positive attitudes

If children are going to read well, they must pay attention to the text and concentrate on the message. If your child is easily distracted or doesn't listen closely to directions, she's not going to understand as much as a classmate who is better able to focus on the subject at hand. Interests and attitudes influence the things on which your child will concentrate. It is valuable, therefore, for you to take reasonable steps to examine ways that you can use your child's interests and can develop positive attitudes that will help her read, listen, and concentrate long enough to learn.

Concentration is not simply an act of the will that becomes powerful through practice. It is more than that. We know, for instance, that our concentration improves when we are interested in the topic. If we are interested in decorating our house, we can focus our attention on a magazine that features interior house designs. Our children are no different. That's the main reason we encourage parents to find books that interest their children. Then children are more likely to pay attention while reading. They are more likely to concentrate on what they are doing. Finding interests, then, is a good place to start.

Later in this chapter we will give more specific ideas on how to concentrate on school work. Those ideas include trying to fake an interest in the subject, writing notes to yourself about your reading, and summarizing or convincing someone else that the information you have just read is valuable or interesting. Some studies have shown that even when people do not start with an interest in a subject, they can become interested by acting as if they are interested. In a sense, they trick themselves into believing that they have an interest, and then they learn better because of it.

Developing an early interest in reading

Some interests seem to develop naturally, perhaps because they are somehow a part of our genetic code. Some people seem to have an inborn interest in active, physical subjects such as sports. Others seem to have an inborn propensity for reflective activities such as philosophizing or being a college professor. Then there are other interests that are learned or developed over time. Children may develop these interests by watching those around them, by competing in school, or by watching television. Likewise, a child may admire a person and then want to do the things that person does.

Because the ability to read fluently means so much to school success and to job success, we want our children to see reading as one of their most valuable tools. That is an attitude, of course, but the attitude can be built only if we can get our children interested in reading in the first place. In other words, we have to help them develop an interest in reading, whether they have an inborn affinity for it or not. Besides that, we also hope that our children will find pleasure and learn

about life through reading. That's another reason why we want to start as early as possible to build an interest in this essential tool.

Preschool books

By reading to a preschool-age child from books with colorful pictures, simple stories, and predictable sentences, you can help her develop an early interest in books and the habit of reading along with you. Starting on page 35, you'll find lists of books that can be read to your preschooler. Many of these titles are old standbys; some are more recent. Most are probably available at your local library and in bookstores.

Read-aloud books

Even after your child learns to read, she will still enjoy hearing you tell a good story. Learn to use your own excitement for stories by reading them aloud. If you can't build up enthusiasm for the book, don't read it or you will kill the book for your child. You promote interest through your own fondness for children's stories or through your own enthusiasm. Reading aloud can promote a positive attitude toward reading and increase the child's interest in language. Later in this book on page 66, we will give lists of read-aloud books intended for children ages three and up, and these can be used to supplement the earlier group of titles intended for preschoolers. But please remember that the ages are merely approximations. Try a few books with your child and find her comfort level.

Predictable books

One very good way to help your young reader is to read from books with predictable story lines. In such stories as "The House that Jack Built," your child is likely to grasp the repetitive "plot" before very many verses are read.

This is the House that Jack Built.

This is the mat that lay in the House that Jack Built.

This is the rat that ate the mat that lay in the House that Jack Built.

This is the cat that killed that rat that ate the mat that lay in the House that Jack Built.

This is the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the mat that lay in the House that Jack Built.

Even if you don't have access to such books, there's no limit to the number of stories of this kind that you and your child could make up:

A mouse was walking through he woods one day. Suddenly he fell in a mud puddle and couldn't get out.

A rabbit came along and tried to help the mouse get out. But the rabbit fell in the mud and couldn't get out.

A fox came along and tried to help the mouse and the rabbit. But the fox fell in the mud and couldn't get out.

A deer came along . . .

Stories of this kind can go on with more animals of ever-increasing size until the skunk comes along and the pattern reverses itself because everyone wants to escape the smell. Let your child join in the "refrain" and suggest animals of her own, dragging elephants, giraffes, and dinosaurs into the crowded mud puddle.

These predictable, repetitive stories are best when accompanied by attractive illustrations. They also may include rhyme or rhythmic language that children can chant. Here are a few predictable books for five-, six-, and seven-year-old children to read on their own or perhaps with a little help from you. If needed, these titles can supply extra reading practice for second or third graders.

Barohas, Sarah E. *I Was Walking down the Road.*
Brown, Marcia. *The Three Billy Goats Gruff.*
Eastman, P.D. *Are You My Mother?*
Fox, Mem. *Hattie and the Fox.*
Galdone, Paul. *The Three Little Pigs.*
Galdone, Paul. *Henny Penny.*
Hawkins, Colin and Jacqui. *Old Mother Hubbard.*
Hutchins, Pat. *Good-Night Owl.*
Langstaff, John. *Frog Went A-Courtin'.*
Martin, Bill Jr. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*
Preston, Edna Mitchell. *Where Did My Mother Go?*
Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are.*
Zaid, Barry. *Chicken Little.*

The "language story" approach

Children love to tell the same story over and over, and they get great pleasure from making up their own stories. This interest in stories can be used to motivate them to read. More importantly, it can be used to help children understand the link between speech and written words. This is known as the "language story" approach. This simply means that you have your child tell a story she has made up herself, and then you write down it for her so she can reread it. The child's own language is used to write "the story." The impression that this creates in the mind of the child follows this logic:

- ✧ What I can think, I can say.
- ✧ What I can say can be written down, so others can read it.
- ✧ What others can read, I can read.

Here is a sample language story dictated by a six-year-old child.

Our Hamster
We have a hamster in our room.
Her name is Miss Lori Blackberry.
She lives in a cage.
She likes to roam around the room.
We like our hamster.

Stories of this type are usually very short, so your child can remember most of what she said, even if she couldn't figure out all of the words if she saw them written elsewhere. But because she can read her own story, she experiences success and learns a valuable lesson about the link between ideas, speech, and print. Using her own story, you can even help your child discover various punctuation marks—for example, that the "?" means a question is being asked; that the letter *s* after the word *bird* means there's more than one; and so on. That experience will help her understand stories written by other people.

Language Story Directions

This is a very informal way to keep the reader's interest high and to show the relationship between speech and the written word. Keep it all casual and relaxed—like a conversation, not a "lesson."

- ✧ Get a large sheet of paper or a large tablet on which you will print the story.
- ✧ Ask your child to tell any short story, including something that happened that day—at school, at play, while watching TV, etc.
- ✧ As your child tells her story, print it on the sheet of paper. If you can, begin each sentence on a new line. Write the story as closely as you can to the language of the child.
- ✧ Try to keep the story fairly short. One page of print is usually enough.
- ✧ When finished writing, ask your child to read it back to you. It doesn't matter if she gets all the words exactly as she originally said them. You want her to get the basic association between speech and print. Feel free to get her back on track if she starts wandering too far away from the original text. But once she picks up the tempo of her own language, let her continue.

- ✧ After your child has reread the story several times and seems to know it by heart, you may want to cut the paper up into sentence strips and let her put the story back together by arranging the sentence strips in order. This helps the child get closer and closer to a specific identification of the whole message with the actual words that make it up.

- ✧ Some children enjoy drawing a picture to illustrate the story they have told.

Nothing emphasizes the link between speech and print as well as having a child read back what she has just spoken. A reluctant reader's attitude may begin to change as she sees her words become real (it's right there in print) and valuable (other people are interested in what she has "written").

By the age of six, a child learns to recognize a large number of spoken words, perhaps as many as twenty thousand different forms. This background in spoken language can help your child develop her abilities in reading and using the printed word. The big advantage of the language story approach is that it builds on something your child can already do successfully: express herself through language. Using the language story approach is like telling your child: "Your language is good. Start with it and learn how to develop it."

Encouraging new interests

Everyone prefers to spend time doing things that are interesting, and children are no different. You already know many of the things your child likes just by listening. Simply talking or answering questions about things seen on television can give you an idea of what interests your child—animals, cartoon characters, space science, mystery stories, and so on.

Obviously, the best way to discover your child's interests is to talk with him and listen closely to what he says. Bring home books from your library or point out newspaper articles about those subjects that your child has mentioned. Show him some pictures, let him pick some that appeal to her, and have him make up a story about one or more of them.

If your child brings a rock or leaf to show you, let him explain how and where she found it, why he picked it up, and what else he would like to know. These daily opportunities not only reveal your child's interests but also give you chances to suggest books and magazines for further exploration.

Don't forget to offer some small reward or sign of recognition when your child has done something that marks a step forward in the process of learning to read. This could be anything from posting a congratulations card on the refrigerator for the whole family to see to bringing home a new book. Sometimes a pat on the head or words of praise from you can mean more than any prize.

The reason you want to discover new interests is to open up a broad world of reading. When you say: "I heard you talk about bicycling, so I brought you one of the specialty magazines," you show that your child's interests are important to you and that books can match almost any interest. Those moments open other windows. "Do you like riding in the park, or on the sidewalk?" Do you like wide or skinny tires?"

As you review interests and try to find new ones, keep a list so you can bring books and newspapers to your child. The Interest Inventory which follows may also help. Feel free to add your own questions.

If your child is able to read the inventory given below, let him fill it out by himself. If not, read it to him. Tell him that this information will help both of you find books and entertainment that you can share. Show your child that his interests are important by getting one book immediately, one that matches a topic that your child checked "Like a Lot."

INTEREST INVENTORY

After school I like to _____.
My favorite TV programs are _____.
My favorite game is _____.
My favorite subject is _____.
My favorite sport is _____.
My hobby is _____.

What do you like to read about? Put a check mark in the column that shows how you like each topic.

	DON'T LIKE	LIKE A LITTLE	LIKE A LOT
Stories about real animals			
Mystery stories			
Adventure stories			
Funny stories			
Comic books			
Science fiction			
Jack and the Bean Stalk			
The Three Billy Goats Gruff			
Cinderella			
Drawing, painting, coloring			
Cutting & pasting			
Puppet shows			
Making model cars			
Taking pictures			
Sewing, cooking			
Doing science experiments			

Increasing attention span

It may frustrate a parent to see that a child who doesn't pay attention in school can spend a whole day playing Nintendo or watching television. Not surprisingly, the more interest a child has in an activity, the more time she is able to concentrate on it. If you plan reading activities around your child's interests, she is more likely to stay involved with what is being read. In order to become a reader your child needs to read a lot, just as she would have to play a lot to become a smooth tennis player. Therefore, you want to find ways to increase the amount of time spent on reading. Here are a few suggestions for holding your child's interest.

✧ *Vary the type of activity*

It's a good idea to plan several different kinds of exercises for a single session of reading practice. This is especially important for a child who is having trouble grasping an idea, because she then has to be kept interested longer than a child who catches on right away. Although all the exercises in one homework session may focus on a particular story, you can introduce it in a number of ways: for example, through reading part of it aloud, then discussing one of the ideas or predicting what will happen, or game playing, or writing.

Here is an example of how you might set up a practice session:

Parent: "This story shows how children find a secret passageway into a land of strange creatures. To get started, why don't I read a page aloud, then you read a page."
(Parent reads)
(Child reads)

Parent: "What do you think will happen next?"

(Parent and child discuss briefly. Ideas will vary, of course.)

Parent: "Now you read the next two or three pages silently and then tell me what happened."

You can see the pattern that is developing. First you help your child focus on the story by being a companion in the reading. Second, you show how to get started and to create questions that will give her purpose, particularly over a short time span. Third, you ask her to report to you what she is learning. When she reports or summarizes the two or three pages you asked her to read, praise her for sticking to the job and repeat the pattern. Don't wear out your child. If she seems eager to pursue the rest of the story on her own, ask her to read a couple of pages and report back. Keep your child predicting what will happen in the next event and then telling you the results of her prediction.

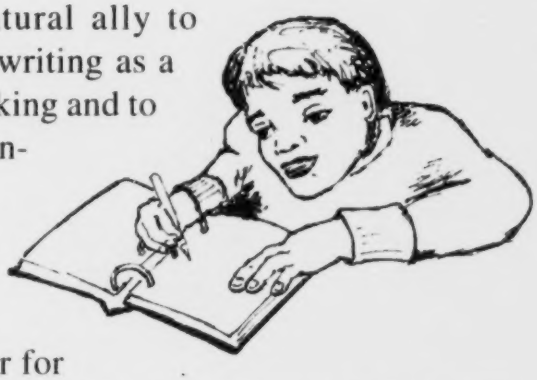
Don't be afraid to pick up the story with your child and read another page aloud, having her read aloud and then another couple of pages of silent reading. Gradually, over a period of months this routine will help most children improve their attention span during reading. This is because the pattern helps the reader focus and set questions for reading and shows that reading can be managed in chunks. You don't have to do the whole thing in one sitting. You read a chunk to get its meaning and then read another chunk. When you need a break, you take it and then return to read another chunk. And so on.

In preparing practice sessions, you can make use of exercises such as the one just described, those explained in later chapters, or you can make up some of your own, according to the needs of your child.

✧ *Use information from the Interest Inventory to choose books your child will enjoy.*

Whether your child is interested in mystery stories or books about far-off planets, it helps to place books and magazines around the house on those subjects of interest. Even if a book is too tough for your son or daughter to read alone, you can read it aloud and have the child read along with you. It's especially important for your child to realize that reading can be done for the sheer enjoyment of a good story or to learn about something of personal interest, not just because "the teacher says we have to read this." Later we will give some suggestions on choosing books that are best suited for your child.

✧ *Build activities around stories your child writes.*



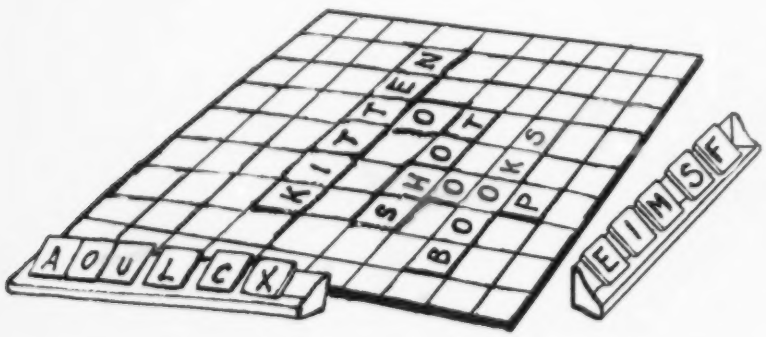
Writing is a natural ally to reading. Try to use writing as a way to promote thinking and to make reading more interesting. Your child's writing will probably be similar to the way she talks, so it should be easier for her to read her own words. Encourage her to write about the stories she reads or to write the kind of story she finds interesting. Your young author might even come up with pictures and captions, if she likes to draw or use a camera. Have your child write about your last trip, or the plot of a television show that you watched. If yours is a very young child, let her tell the story orally; you can then help write it down and your child can then read back what she said. See our previous discussion on the "language story" approach.

As much as possible, encourage your child to write about books she reads, things she learns, and questions she wants answered. Writing supports reading and is an excellent way to learn.

✧ *Use games to make practice sessions lively.*

Games that require matching words with pictures are good practice for a child who's learning to read. Matching sentences and pictures from inexpensive books extends that idea. After you have read a story to your child a number of times, you may want to cut the pictures from the text to challenge your child to assemble the story as it occurred in the book. Understandably, you would do this kind of exercise with "throw-away books," not with those that you want to keep in your child's permanent library.

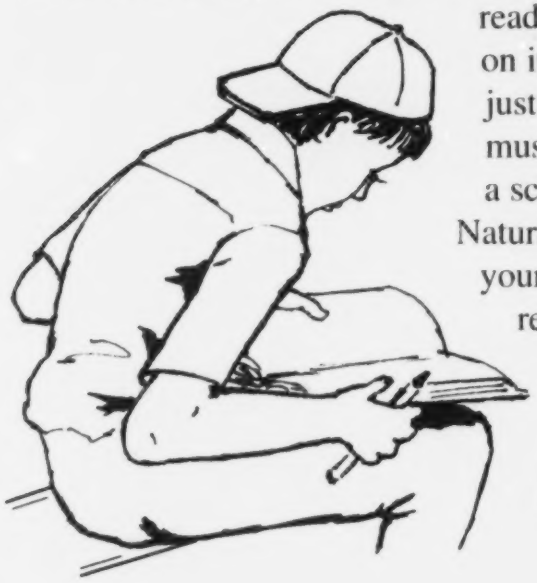
Well-known games (such as Bingo) and simple activities (such as making paper cutouts) can be adapted to help your child develop word skills. By combining reading practice with related activities, you may be surprised to find that your child's attention span can gradually increase. When your child sees that reading and doing things can go hand-in-hand, she will pay more attention and over time develop the habit of sticking with reading. But please remember, reading activities have to make sense to your child. We use games to make reading fun and sensible.



Motivating positive attitudes

Motivation is the persuasive power that prompts us to act. We may be motivated to do something out of a need to satisfy curiosity, explore new interests, reach some goal, or simply to take part in an activity that holds our attention. Not all motivation comes from within us. It can come from outside as well: the need to pass a test, for example, or to avoid possible harm by not walking down a dark alley at night.

Motivating forces play a powerful role in the reading process. Your child may feel outside pressure with regard to schoolwork ("I have to get a passing grade" or "I have to do it because the teacher says so"). These are normal external pressures, but they need to be balanced with personal or intrinsic reasons to act. If your child feels these outside pressures are the only reasons for reading, he may begin to view reading as a chore, as something one has to do. You can expand his vision by focusing on his interests and by stressing that reading is rewarding on its own terms, not just something that must be done to meet a school requirement. Naturally, you want your child to see reading a book as a positive experience, both for learning and for pleasure.



The main reason we all are concerned about motivation is that it gives us the energy to work long enough to develop positive attitudes. Attitudes—habits of the mind—guide our actions. If your child says: "When I need information, a book is a good place to look," he has a good attitude about reading for information. You can help build these positive attitudes by what you yourself say and do.

Motivation helps understanding because motivation involves purpose and energy. Without purpose and energy, your child will not comprehend a book. His attitude can be positive or negative, strong or weak, but attitudes themselves do not determine whether or not he reads well. Your child may be strongly motivated to read a certain book because it discusses a subject of great interest. If the material is badly written, however, or is beyond your child's ability to understand, he may develop a negative attitude toward the book. If that negative experience happens often enough, he may begin to reject reading itself; it just isn't worth the pain to struggle with dull or difficult material.

You want your child to have a positive attitude, a good feeling about reading. Those good feelings result from previous successes or from the fun promised by listening to Daddy read or from the warmth of being close to Mommy when she reads. They also result from the fun that a reader experiences from certain types of books. That fun explains why certain types of books

hook their readers into reading the entire series, like the Hardy Boys or Nancy Drew. (Yes, they are still popular.) The Baby Sitters Club, Sweet Valley series, and books like *Amelia Bedelia* all fall into the same category—fun books that have their familiar characters acting out their familiar brand of humor and adventure. Just as adults return to Harlequin romances, western adventures, and spy thrillers, so do children appreciate their own series for their own reasons. In serial books, children's interests and a sense of affinity for the characters work together to keep them coming back for each new book in the series.

Once after a six-year-old boy had been in first grade for two weeks I asked him what he now thought about school. "I like it a little," he said, "but I still hate it a lot." That attitude reflects what he thought his parents or his friends expected him to say. After two weeks in school, he would not on his own say, "I still hate it a lot." Attitudes stem from many sources, especially from the home and the neighborhood. That little six-year-old child already carried a negative attitude about school—an attitude that will influence his performance, no matter what the teacher does. Notice that he had to say that he hated it even though there were some things happening that he evidently liked—"I like it a little."

Attitudes about reading can be formed in the same way. After repeated negative statements at home or in the neighborhood, it is very difficult for a young child to believe that reading will ever have any real benefit. Teachers try to counteract negative attitudes by relying heavily on motivational techniques. If a child is exposed only to materials he feels are dull, outside his interest, or beyond his understanding, he'll develop a negative attitude toward reading. With the enormous number and variety of children's books available today, there's no reason for this to happen to your child.

Very young children are attracted to books with plenty of colorful pictures. With such books you can show your child the excitement of words and pictures. Children love to find details in pictures. An older child may get caught up in mystery stories, science fiction, westerns, sports stories, dinosaurs, or King Arthur. Once hooked, children find that books can fill areas of their interest, and a positive attitude toward reading grows naturally. By paying attention to your child's likes and dislikes, you can help build positive attitudes.

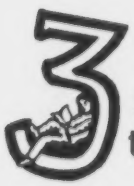
Steps for developing attitudes

The way we develop attitudes can be broken down into these steps:

Steps for Building Attitudes

Become aware that positive attitudes do exist. (Some people like to read.)

Respond to someone's action that shows the attitude. ("I see you like to read and it makes you happy.")



Value an activity and talk about liking it. ("I see John reading and enjoying mystery stories. That's good, and I like to read them, too.")

Make a place in your life for the activity you value. ("For at least twenty minutes every night, I will read a book I enjoy.")

What do these steps mean to you as you try to help your child improve? First of all, it means that you have to see yourself in those four steps. Are you at step number four where you are willing to make a place in your life for working on reading on a regular basis? It doesn't have to be a burden. You can find ways to make

it pleasant and rewarding. If nothing else, it is rewarding to know that you are giving your child the advantage of a positive attitude towards reading and school. But somehow you have to organize your schedule so you can invest twenty to thirty minutes each day to read and to study with your child.

You can use the four steps as a means for building mental habits in your child. Are there people in the family or in the neighborhood who exemplify the kinds of attitudes towards reading that you want your child to have? Point them out. Make her aware that many people read and are successful because of it. Whether these people read for fun or read for information, talk to your child about them. Don't forget yourself—you are the most important example your child will see. You can help by making reading a significant part of your family's daily life. For example, you can read aloud the headlines from the morning paper, or spend time together in the evening taking turns reading from a book.

Second, praise people who show the attitude you are trying to develop. And ask your child to talk about an activity where the positive attitude reveals itself. Ask her about those children who read a lot or who seem to enjoy reading. What do they do? What do they believe about reading that enables them to read well or to enjoy reading? In this step you want your child to think about and to talk about the activity that reveals a desirable habit of mind. You might help at this point by bringing home books on subjects in which your child expressed an interest. ("You said you thought you might like to be a pilot someday. Here is a library book on some of the things that pilots do. See what you think.") You could then talk about receiving books. What does your activity

enable your child to do? What does your activity say about your own thoughts? (It shows that you think books are important, but more to the point, it shows that you think your child is important.)

The third step is a big leap forward in attitude development. Now your child has to say that reading is valuable. Sometimes it takes a long time for children to arrive at this point, especially if they have few positive examples around them. Don't force this step. It has to arrive naturally. Remember that your child will value reading or will turn to reading for information or for pleasure when she sees that reading gives her something that she needs or wants. Sometimes that realization takes many years. For one of my children it didn't happen until junior high school. You can help by repeating steps one and two, and especially by showing your own commitment to reading in your own life.

The fourth step is to show that you value an activity by making a regular place for it. Some people will say that reading for pleasure is a value or that it is valuable to learn to study-read effectively, but they do not put that value into practice. Some people, it seems, do not have enough sense of order about their lives to make a place for important activities or for activities they say are valuable. Instead, they let daily events take over their lives and can't seem to organize their priorities. Getting through the next day, whatever it may bring, seems to be the only priority they have.

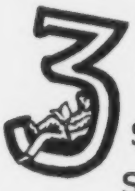
One technique to help your child make a place for reading activities is called *visualizing*. When your child says

that she values a certain kind of reading, ask her to picture herself doing that activity. She should make the picture as specific as possible—the place, the time, the lighting, the purpose for reading. Ask her to picture herself doing the reading and feeling the pleasure of completing the activity. For example, she will be confident in school; she will experience an adventure vicariously; she will be well read on the subject and can respond better than any of her friends; and so on. Also ask her to picture herself organizing her time so she will carry out that activity. Each night, ask your child to picture this activity, when and where she is doing it, and the feelings of satisfaction that she will get from it. Through this technique you may gradually make that image so powerful in her mind that she will in fact organize her daily schedule to include the activity that you both agree is valuable for her.

The fact that you value reading will be a great motivator for your child. Your example and your praise for reading cannot be overstated. But motivation is only the beginning. Habits of mind are built slowly over the years and result from repeated words and actions. You can foster the development of positive attitudes by following the four steps outlined in this chapter.

Help your child become aware that some people have positive attitudes about reading and writing.

Get your child to respond to and talk about an activity that represents the attitude.



Lead your child to say that she values reading books on certain subjects. She needs to say that she likes to do it.

Help your child make a place in her life for the kind of reading that she says she values. Then your child has a strong positive attitude that will serve her in all that she does.

The value of reading aloud

If you want your children to understand that books are important, then you have to let them see you read. If you want to demonstrate that books are interesting and fun, then you should try reading aloud to your children.

Reading aloud most nearly resembles our most common form of communication: person-to-person conversation. This makes reading aloud particularly attractive to many people. It can take on the closeness and the sense of intimacy that you can achieve when two people talk face to face.

For very young children, there is an obvious advantage. They may have not yet figured out the print code, but when their parents read aloud to them, they can participate in the excitement or the humor of a book. Later, in their school years, children still appreciate hearing a story read to them, probably because it represents a form of togetherness that is reassuring.

Once children can read on their own, they can be readers as well as listeners. When they do their share of the reading, you can model the behavior of a good listener. You can ask questions for clarification; you can

ask for a passage to be read again because you liked it or because you need another reading in order to understand it more fully; or you can make a comment that emphasizes the ideas or the language of the story. Reactions such as these help to create the atmosphere of a conversation. You and the reader are beginning a kind of dialog over the book you are reading. Then, when it is your turn to read aloud, your children will feel more comfortable about stating their reactions or asking the questions that come to their minds as you read.

If you think about the things that make a story comprehensible to you, those are the things that you should try to talk about when you or your children are reading aloud. Some of the common techniques for comprehending are:

- *Visualizing*—"What a vivid picture that paints in my mind."

- *Making it personal*—"I felt that way when my grandmother died."

- *Taking a character's point of view*—"If I were in her shoes, . . ."

- *Predicting outcomes*—"I'll bet she's going to catch him when he tries to run away from home."

Take a conversational tone

Some people read aloud better than others. Some people run or play golf better than others. In each of these skills there is a matter of natural talent. But more important is the question of practice. If you want to become a better golfer, you have to practice. If you want to become a better reader, you have to practice. The best time to practice is when your child is young. Then, when he expects a better performance, you will have had several years of practice that have made you better.

You talk all the time. The way you talk seems to serve you, to hold the interest of those around you. Use your conversational tone when you read. In conversation you change your voice to express surprise, anger, sadness, mystery. Do the same thing when you read. That's all your children expect of you—that you sound like you are talking to them. If you feel uncomfortable at first, there are ways that you can get some help. One of the easiest is to borrow a tape-recorded book from the library or purchase one from your local bookstore. By listening to others read a book aloud, you can find some pointers that will help you.

After you hear others read a children's book, you will gain a sense of how you might read to your children. Keep the story moving at a steady pace, as clear as you can make it. Let your voice reflect the interest you have in the story and in the benefits your children get from listening to and responding to a story.

Good literature gives perspective

We all can vividly remember that favorite teacher who would read aloud to the entire class every day after lunch. Our images of particular characters such as Tom Sawyer or Pippi Longstocking remained with us long after the book was finished. Those books have remained our lifelong friends.

As parents, we read aloud to our children to provide a similar experience for them. But reading aloud not only establishes a special time for sharing; it also affects our understanding of language.

We read to children for many of the reasons that we talk to them. We want to explain and provide information about the world. We want them to be curious and inquisitive and see language as entertaining and stimulating.

Reading aloud affects our children's reading competencies in important ways. When students hear a story, they often are motivated to read it themselves. It stimulates and expands their interests and appreciation of certain types of literature.

Good literature gives children a perspective that enables them to evaluate the books they read by themselves. Their comprehension also improves as their vocabulary and information about the world (their background knowledge for reading other material) expands.

Reading aloud affects the full range of language processes. It helps children discover similarities and differences between oral and written language, which sharpens their speaking and listening skills and their understanding of narrative structure. Writing is affected positively because reading aloud provides them with opportunities to use their imagination and exposes them to different literary styles. They may try out these styles in their own writing.

While reading aloud improves reading and listening skills and expands use of oral language, it also motivates children to read. We know that children who have been read to at home usually like to read and therefore become proficient readers.

Make reading aloud interactive

Just as you probably talk to yourself about the things that you read, so you want to talk with your children when you are reading aloud or when they are reading aloud to you. You ask yourself whether or not a statement is believable, what is going to happen next, and how these ideas apply to your life. Those are natural reactions as your mind interacts with the mind of the writer.

Encourage your children to interact with the book by asking them to talk aloud about their own feelings and thoughts as you move through the story. You are modeling thinking and problem-solving for them, but it will seem so natural that they will not see your comments and your questions as interfering with the story. If you overdo that sort of self-talk and questioning, chances are they will let you know.

Here are examples of the kinds of questions and statements that you might use as you read aloud or listen to your child read to you:

- ✧ Has anything like this ever happened to you?
- ✧ Do you think you felt the same as the story characters?
- ✧ I can see that event so clearly in my mind that it is like watching TV.
- ✧ I am surprised at what he said. Does it surprise you?

- ✧ Which character interests you the most?
- ✧ Is there anything in this book that you would tell your friends about?

The point is that you want to talk about the story as it progresses and talk about it as naturally as possible. Your thoughts and those of your children will make book discussions a natural part of your lives. As your child gets older, you may find that these book talks are valuable ways for you to maintain communication with your children. After all, when you are talking about the characters and the events in a book, you are not digging into the personal lives of your children. You are talking about a life outside the intimate parent-child relationship.

Choose a book and do it

Reading aloud can be a pleasure to you and your children, and we know that it is beneficial to them in school and in the general experiences that reading aloud provides. So find a book and begin.

In the next chapter, we have listed books for children by age and by the types of literature that children often like. You will recognize some of them, and some of them will be new to you. These books were chosen because they lend themselves to being read aloud.

The books listed have been recommended by at least three people who have studied read-aloud books. On page 25, you will find a list of resources for parents. These are the resources used in selecting books for this chapter. For more information on read-aloud books, consult one of the resources listed or ask your librarian for help.

Read-Aloud Book Lists

Preschool

The following preschool books enable you and your child to sit together and explore the story and the pictures. They are listed according to broad themes to help you choose books that may illustrate something that is currently important in your family life.

Share with Friends

Ancona, George. *Getting Together.*
Cohen, Miriam. *Will I Have a Friend?*
Gretz, Susanna. *Frog in the Middle.*
Heinz, Helms. *Friends.*
Johnson, Deplores. *What Will Mommy Do When I'm at School?*
Simon, Nora. *I'm Busy, Too.*

Speak and Listen

Aylesworth, Jim. *Country Crossing.*
Hautzig, Ester. *In the Park.*
Kamen, Gloria. *Paddle, Said the Swan.*
Keats, Ezra Jack. *Apt. 3.*
Schlein, Miriam. *Big Talk.*
Serfozo, Mary. *Rain Talk.*

Paint and Build

Browne, Anthony. *The Little Bear Book.*
Hoban, Tana. *Circles, triangles and squares.*
————. *Read Signs.*
Hutchins, Pat. *Changes, Changes.*
Jonas, Ann. *Round Trip.*
Serfozo, Mary. *Who Said Red?*

Eat Well

Gross, Ruth Belov. *What's on My Plate?*
Morris, Ann. *Bread, Bread, Bread.*
Sharmat, Mitchell. *Gregory, the Terrible Eater.*

Sing and Dance Away!

Isadora, Rachel. *Max.*
Langstaff, John. *Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go.*
Sage, James. *The Little Band.*

Animal Friends

Allen, Marjorie and Shelley Rotner. *Changes.*
deRegniers, Beatrice. *May I Bring a Friend?*
Domanska, Janina. *Little Red Hen.*
————. *What Do You See?*
Hutchins, Pat. *Good-Night, Owl.*
————. *Rosie's Walk.*
Keats, Ezra Jack. *Hi, Cat!*
————. *Kitten for a Day.*
————. *Pet Show.*
Reeves, Mona Rabun. *I Had a Cat.*

Tales of Wonder

Ancona, G. and M. Beth. *Handtalk Zoo.*
Brown, Marcia. *Stone Soup.*
Dragonwagon, Cresent. *Half a Moon and One Whole Star.*
Greeley, Valerie. *White Is the Moon.*
Jones, Maurice. *I'm Going on a Dragon Hunt.*
Takeshita, Fumiko. *The Park Bench.*

Personal Growth

Geraghty, Paul. *Look Out, Patrick.*
Hartman, Gail. *As the Crow Flies.*
Howard, Elizabeth F. *The Train to Lulu's.*
Roe, Eileen. *All I Am.*
————. *With My Brother/ Con mi Hermano.*
Wynne-Jones, Tim. *Builder of the Moon.*

Kindergarten—Grade Six

These books have been recommended in at least three sources of read-aloud books for children.

Adventure, K-3

Bemelmans, Ludwig. *Madeline.*
Cooney, Barbara. *Miss Rumphius.*
Grimm, Jacob. *Bremen Town Musicians.*
Noble, Trinka H. *The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash.*
Peet, Bill. *Chester the Worldly Pig.*
Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are.*
Smith, Robert K. *Chocolate Fever.*
Steig, William. *Solomon the Rusty Nail.*
Swallow, Pam. *Melvil and Dewey in the Chips.*
Warner, Gertrude C. *Boxcar Children.*

Adventure, 4-6

Cleary, Beverly. *The Mouse and the Motorcycle.*
Collodi, Carlo. *The Adventures of Pinocchio.*
DuBois, William P. *The Twenty-One Balloons.*
Fitzgerald, John. *The Great Brain.*
Fleischman, Sid. *Humbug Mountain.*
————. *The Whipping Boy.*
Pyle, Howard. *The Story of King Arthur and His Knights.*
Selden, George. *The Cricket in Times Square.*
Sperry, Armstrong. *Call It Courage.*
Steig, William. *Abel's Island.*
Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island.*
Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.*
————. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.*

Animals, K-3

Barrett, Judi. *Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing.*
Farley, Walter. *Black Stallion.*
Lofting, Hugh. *The Story of Doctor Doolittle.*
McCloskey, Robert. *Make Way for Ducklings.*
Milne, A. A. *Winnie-the-Pooh*
Potter, Beatrix. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit.*
Simon, Seymour. *Animal Fact, Animal Fable.*
Slobodkina, Esphyr. *Caps for Sale.*
Seuss, Dr. *Horton Hatches the Egg.*
Titus, Eve. *Anatole.*
Ungerer, Tomi. *Crictor.*
White, E. B. *Charlotte's Web.*

Animals, 4-6

Alexander, Lloyd. *The Town Cats and Other Tales.*
Armstrong, William. *Sounder.*
Bond, Michael. *A Bear Called Paddington.*
Burnford, Sheila. *Incredible Journey.*
Garfield, James. *Follow My Leader.*
Heath, W. L. *Max the Great.*
Herriot, James. *Blossom Comes Home.*
Holland, Isabella. *Alan and the Animal Kingdom.*
King-Smith, Dick. *Harry's Mad.*
Morey, Walt. *Gentle Ben.*

Fantasy, K-3

Balian, Lorna. *The Animal.*
Banks, Lynne Reid. *Indian in the Cupboard.*
Faulkner, Matt. *The Amazing Voyage of Jackie Grace.*
Gerstein, Mordecai. *Arnold of the Ducks.*
Kellogg, Steven. *Island of the Skog.*
Lionni, Leo. *Frederick.*
Peet, Bill. *Whingdingdilly.*
Sadler, Marilyn. *Alistair in Outer Space.*
Seeger, Pete. *Abiyoyo.*
Seuss, Dr. *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street.*
Van Woerkom, Dorothy. *Alexander and the Rockeater.*
Yorinks, Arthur. *Company's Coming.*
————. *It Happened in Pinsk.*

Fantasy, 4-6

Alexander, Lloyd. *The Book of Three.*
————. *Westmark.*
Ames, Mildred. *Is There Life on a Plastic Planet?*
Avi. *Bright Shadow.*
Babbitt, Natalie. *The Search for Delicious.*
————. *Tuck Everlasting.*
Baum, Frank L. *Ozma of Oz.*
Cameron, Eleanor. *Wonderful Flight to the Mushroom Planet.*
Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.*
Dahl, Roald. *James and the Giant Peach.*
Grahame, Kenneth. *The Wind in the Willows.*
LeGuin, Ursula. *A Wizard of Earthsea.*
L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time.*
Lewis, C. S. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.*
Norton, Mary. *The Borrowers.*

O'Brien, Robert. *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH.*
Pinkwater, Daniel. *Lizard Music.*
Schwartz, Alvin. *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark.*
Sleator, William. *Into the Dream.*
Slote, Alfred. *My Trip to Alpha.*
Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit.*
White, E. B. *The Trumpet of the Swan.*

Folk and Fairy Tales, K-3

Aardema, Verna. *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain.*
————. *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears.*
Aesop. *Seven Fables from Aesop.*
Andersen, Hans Christian. *The Emperor's New Clothes.*
Brown, Marcia. *Three Billy Goats Gruff.*
Cooney, Barbara. *Chanticleer and the Fox.*
Emberley, Barbara. *One Wide River to Cross.*
Haley, Gail. *A Story, a Story: An African Tale.*
Hyman, Trina Schart. *Little Red Riding Hood.*
Kipling, Rudyard. *Elephant's Child.*
————. *How the Camel Got His Hump.*
McDermott, Gerald. *Anansi the Spider: A Tale from the Ashanti.*
————. *The Stonecutter: A Japanese Tale.*
Mosel, Arlene. *Tikki Tikki Tembo.*
Perrault, Charles. *Puss in Boots.*
Wildsmith, Brian. *The Lion and the Rat.*
Zemach, Harve. *Nail Soup: A Swedish Folk Tale.*
Zemach, Margot. *It Could Always Be Worse.*

Folk and Fairy Tales, 4-6

Asbjornsen, Peter C. *East o' the Sun and West 'o the Moon.*
Chase, Richard. *Jack Tales.*
Gable, Paul. *Buffalo Woman.*
Hamilton, Virginia. *The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales.*
Kha, Dang Manh. *In the Land of Small Dragon: A Vietnamese Folktale.*
Lester, Julius. *How Many Spots Does a Leopard Have? And Other Tales.*
Phelps, Ethel Johnston. *The Maid of the North and Other Folk Tale Heroines.*
Schwartz, Alvin. *Whoppers: Tall Tales and Other Lies.*
Singer, Isaac Bashevis. *Zlatech the Goat and Other Stories.*
Uchida, Yoshiko. *Sea of Gold and Other Tales from Japan.*

Historical Fiction, K-3

Cohen, Barbara. *Molly's Pilgrim.*
————. *Thank You, Jackie Robinson.*
Dalgliesh, Alice. *The Courage of Sarah Noble.*
Gauch, Patricia Lee. *This Time, Tempe Wick?*
Hall, Donald. *Ox-Cart Man.*
Kellogg, Steven. *Johnny Appleseed.*
Lord, Bett Bao. *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson.*
Monjo, F. N. *The Drinking Gourd.*
Polacco, Patricia. *The Keeping Quilt.*
Snyder, Carol. *Ike and Mama and the Once-a-Year Suit.*
Turkle, Brinton. *Adventures of Obadiah.*
Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *Little House in the Big Woods.*

Historical Fiction, 4-6

Brink, Carol R. *Caddie Woodlawn.*
Burch, Robert. *Ida Comes Early Over the Mountain.*
Coerr, Eleanor. *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes.*
Collier, James. *My Brother Sam Is Dead.*
Cooney, Barbara. *Island Boy.*
Fleischman, Sid. *By the Great Horn Spoon.*
Fritz, Jean. *And Then What Happened, Paul Revere?*
————. *What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?*
————. *Where Do You Think You're Going, Christopher Columbus?*
MacLachlan, Patricia. *Sarah, Plain and Tall.*
O'Dell, Scott. *Island of the Blue Dolphins.*
Speare, Elizabeth George. *Sign of the Beaver.*
Taylor, Sydney. *All-of-a-Kind Family.*
Thayer, Ernest L. *Casey at the Bat: A Ballad of the Republic Sung in the Year 1888.*

Humor, K-3

Ahlberg, Janet and Allan. *Funnybones.*
Atwater, Richard. *Mr. Popper's Penguins.*
Allard, Harry. *Miss Nelson Is Missing.*
Burningham, John. *Mr. Gumpy's Outing.*
Cleary, Beverly. *Beezus and Ramona.*
————. *Ramona the Brave.*
Lindgren, Barbro. *The Wild Baby.*
Marshall, James. *Mary Alice, Operator Number Nine.*
Parish, Peggy. *Amelia Bedelia.*
Rey, H. A. *Curious George.*
Scieszka, Jon. *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs.*
Seuss, Dr. *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street.*
Viorst, Judith. *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day.*
————. *My Mama Says There Aren't Any Zombies, Ghosts, Vampires, Creatures, Demons, Monsters, Fiends, Goblins, or Things.*
Ziefert, Harriet. *I Won't Go to Bed!*

Humor, 4-6

Byars, Betsy. *The Pinballs.*
Cleary, Beverly. *Ramona Forever.*
Conford, Ellen. *Lenny Kandell, Smart Aleck.*
Gilson, Jamie. *Do Bananas Chew Gum?*
Gwynne, Fred. *A Chocolate Moose for Dinner.*
Lindgren, Astrid. *Pippi Longstocking.*
Manes, Stephen. *Chicken Trek: The Third Strange Thing that Happened to Oscar Noodleman.*
McCloskey, Robert. *Homer Price.*
Park, Barbara. *Skinnybones.*
Rockwell, Thomas. *How to Eat Fried Worms.*

Mystery, K-3

Adler, David A. *My Dog and the Birthday Mystery.*
Clifford, Eth. *Help! I'm a Prisoner in the Library.*
Cole, Bruce. *The Pumpkinville Mystery.*
Kellogg, Steven. *The Mysterious Tadpole.*
Levy, Elizabeth. *Frankenstein Moved in on the 4th Floor.*
Massie, Diane R. *Chameleon Was a Spy.*
Sharmat, Marjorie W. *Nate the Great.*
Willis, Val. *Secret in the Matchbox.*

Mystery, 4-6

Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *The Secret Garden.*
Fitzhugh, Louise. *Harriet the Spy.*
Howe, Deborah and James. *Bunnicula: A Rabbit-Tale of Mystery.*
Konigsburg, E. L. *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler.*
Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *The Bodies in the Besseldorf Hotel.*
Newman, Robert. *The Case of the Baker Street Irregular.*
Roberts, Willo D. *The View from the Cherry Tree.*
Simon, Seymour. *Einstein Anderson, Science Sleuth.*
Sobol, Donald J. *Encyclopedia Brown, Boy Detective.*
Titus, Eve. *Basil of Baker Street.*

Nature, K-3

Clifton, Lucille. *The Boy Who Didn't Believe in Spring.*
Hopkins, Lee Bennett (ed.). *Moments: Poems about the Seasons.*
Johnston, Tony. *Yonder.*
McCloskey, Robert. *Blueberries for Sal.*
————. *One Morning in Maine.*
————. *Time of Wonder.*
McLerran, Alice. *The Mountain that Loved a Bird.*
Peet, Bill. *Gnats of Knotty Pine.*
————. *Wump World.*
Peters, Lisa. *The Sun, the Wind, and the Rain.*
Ryder, Joanne. *Chipmunk Song.*
Seuss, Dr. *The Lorax.*

Nature, 4-6

Bowden, Joan C. *Why the Tides Ebb and Flow.*
Brittain, Bill. *Dr. Dredd's Wagon of Wonders.*
Callen, Larry. *Night of the Twisters.*
Davis, Hubert. *A January Fog Will Freeze a Hog and Other Weather Folklore.*
Ebensen, Barbara J. *Cold Stars and Fireflies: Poems of the Four Seasons.*
Fleming, Susan. *Trapped on the Golden Flyer.*
George, Jean Craighead. *Julie of the Wolves.*
Giff, Patricia. *The Winter Worm Business.*
O'Dell, Scott. *Black Pearl.*
Ruckman, Joy. *Night of the Twisters.*

Poetry, K-3

Baylor, Byrd. *Amigo.*
Calmenson, Stephanie. *Never Take a Pig to Lunch: And Other Funny Poems about Animals.*
Cole, William. *I'm Mad at You.*

deRegniers, Beatrice Schenk et al. (eds.). *Sing a Song of Popcorn: Every Child's Book of Poems.*
Livingston, Myra Cohn. *Higgledy-Piggledy: Verses and Pictures.*
————. *A Song I Sang to You: A Selection of Poems.*
Merriam, Eve. *You Be Good and I'll Be Night: Jumping-on-the-Bed Poems.*
Milne, A. A. *When We Were Very Young.*
————. *Now We Are Six.*
O'Neill, Mary L. *Hailstones and Halibut Bones.*
Prelutsky, Jack. *My Parents Think I'm Sleeping.*
————. *The Baby Uggs Are Hatching.*

Poetry, 4-6

Adoff, Arnold. *Eats.*
Agree, Rose H. (ed.). *How to Eat a Poem and Other Morsels: Food Poems for Children.*
Cole, William (ed.). *Beastly Boys and Ghastly Girls.*
————. *Poem Stew.*
Dunning, Stephen, et al. (eds.). *Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle . . . and Other Modern Verse.*
Fleischman, Paul. *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices.*
Hopkins, Lee Bennett (ed.). *Dinosaurs.*
Hughes, Langston. *Don't You Turn Back.*
Kennedy, X. J. and Dorothy Kennedy (eds.). *Knock at a Star: A Child's Introduction to Poetry.*
Mizumura, Kazue. *Flower Moon Snow: A Book of Haiku.*
Ness, Evaline (ed.). *Amelia Mixed the Mustard and Other Poems.*
Sandburg, Carl. *Rainbows Are Made.*
Viorst, Judith. *If I Were in Charge of the World and Other Worries: Poems for Children and Their Parents.*

Realistic (Problem) K-3

Andersen, Hans Christian. *The Ugly Duckling.* (self-esteem)
Estes, Eleanor. *The Hundred Dresses.* (prejudice)
Keats, Ezra Jack. *Peter's Chair.* (sibling rivalry)
Leaf, Munro. *The Story of Ferdinand.* (peace)
Lionni, Leo. *Fish Is Fish.* (self-concept)
Mathis, Sharon Bell. *The Hundred Penny Box.* (grandparents; memories)
Ness, Evaline. *Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine.* (fantasy vs. reality)
Piper, Watty. *The Little Engine That Could.* (determination)
Rabe, Bernice. *Balancing Girl.* (disability)
Seuss, Dr. *Horton Hatches the Egg.* (commitment)
Viorst, Judith. *The Tenth Good Thing about Barney.* (Death of a pet.)
Zolotow, Charlotte. *The Quarreling Book.*

Realistic (Problem), 4-6

Bauer, Marion. *On My Honor.* (death)
Blue, Rose. *Grandma Didn't Wave Back.* (aging)
Byars, Betsy. *Cracker Jackson.* (wife abuse)
————. *The Not-Just-Anybody Family.* (family)
Cleary, Beverly. *Dear Mr. Henshaw.* (divorce; moving)
Merrill, Jean. *The Pushcart War.* (progress)
Park, Barbara. *Don't Make Me Smile.* (divorce)
Paterson, Katherine. *Bridge to Terabithia.* (friendship; death)
————. *The Great Gilly Hopkins.* (foster child)
Sachs, Marilyn. *Bear's House.* (family)
Taylor, Mildred D. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.* (prejudice)
Uchida, Yoshiko. *Journey Home.* (war)

Selecting Books for Children

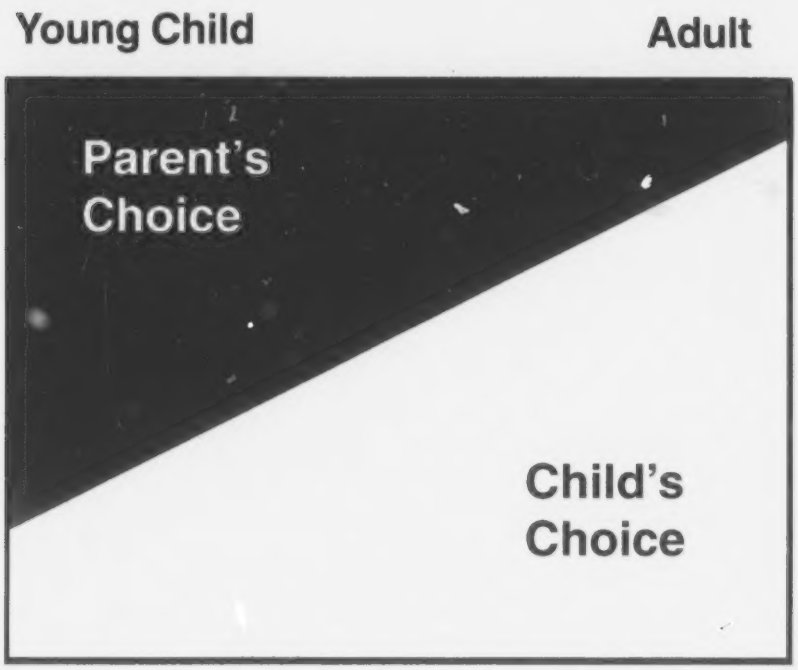
From the time children first experience a sense of independence—by crawling to touch a family pet, for example—they begin to make choices. All children do. Each one of us thereby begins a life-long search for things and ideas that interest and please us.

Choice of books

As a parent, you guide your child's choices and actually make some of them when that is appropriate. No one is surprised that some choices are in your child's hands, some are in your hands. Look at book selection in that way. During your child's early years, you probably make most of the choices; later, children make more and more of their own selections. But even into adolescence and adulthood, it is appropriate and desirable for you to purchase books for your children and to discuss the ideas and pleasures that are found in those books. You may think of book-giving either as a continuing education or as a reminder of the values that reading gives us throughout life.

What this discussion seems to lead to, then, is a parallel series of choices for you and for your child from early childhood to adulthood. With age and experience, your child chooses more of his own books—but you,

too, are always there, choosing books and supporting your child's interests. This changing perspective about the lifelong choice of books may be represented in the diagram below.



Looking for advice

If you want to keep books available for your child, you need ideas and resources. You should of course take advantage of the expertise of your local librarian. Ask teachers and other child-care people for their advice. They may see interests or needs that you have overlooked. Librarians, teachers, and bookstores often have lists of books that can give you specific titles for typical interests and reading levels. You will also find books with recommended titles and with synopses of the titles listed.

Parents sharing books

One excellent way to demonstrate your interest in books is to share ideas with your child. If you give your child a book, you might tell her your own reasons for liking the book. And think how impressive it would be if you and your child read the same book and then discussed it. You could each contribute to your mutual knowledge and appreciation of the book.

Book sharing between you and your child should not be a quiz, of course. It is a time for parent and child to look together at the same events and ideas and to discuss them in order to learn together. Some of the most rewarding conversations I had with my son took place when he was twelve or thirteen. He discovered a science-fiction book by Frank Herbert called *Dune*. We began reading and talking our way through a trilogy of *Dune* books, wondering how people could live on a desert planet, comparing characters, guessing how the next twist in the plot would turn out. What fun we had together!

All of this happened when my son was becoming an adolescent—a time, according to conventional wisdom, when he wasn't supposed to talk to his parents but rather was expected to be rejecting parents in the name of freedom. He did some of that, too, but *Dune* gave us a reason to talk to each other and to explore a fascinating world together. We had something more to discuss than our own parent-child relationship. It helps, of course, if that sort of book-sharing relationship begins early in a child's life.

As you search for books for your child, there are a few points to keep in mind. First, long before your child can talk, you can read to him. A very young child will enjoy nursery rhymes and other short, rhythmic pieces, even if he doesn't understand all of the words, because of the tempo and repetitive patterns of the language. Second, you should pick children's books that you like yourself. The pleasure in your voice and the feelings you communicate as you read will affect the way in which your child responds to reading.

Your child's first books should be attractive ones with pictures that relate to the stories. Most young children like drawings that aren't cluttered with too much detail, and those that portray subjects such as the child's favorite activities or animals that are familiar. Cloth-covered books that a child can handle are a good investment, since awkward little hands won't damage them.

There are many excellent references which can guide you in choosing books, especially books for beginning reading students. A number of resources are listed later in Appendix E. One of the best references is *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading* by Nancy Larrick. You should be able to find this at your library; if not, it's worth the purchase price for parents interested in encouraging children of all ages to

read, even children in middle school. The author lists the traits of easy-to-read books:

- ✧ The type is large and clear.
- ✧ The vocabulary is simple.
- ✧ Sentences are short and follow the rhythmic pattern of conversation.
- ✧ Printed lines are short, with the line breaks at natural pauses in conversation.
- ✧ Pages are uncluttered, and white space is plentiful.
- ✧ The pictures give clues that make reading easier and more interesting.

(Nancy Larrick. *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading*. 5th ed. New York: Bantam, 1982, p. 46)

Although it's obviously not possible to find books that are equally suited to all learners, there are many good suggestions in the lists of books for preschool children given on page 35. Here's a quick list of some other books that are especially good for children who are just starting to read:

Recommended books for beginning readers

Author	
Leslie Brooke	*Ring O'Roses*
Beatrix Potter	*The Tale of Peter Rabbit*
Ezra Jack Keats	*A Snowy Day*
Aileen Fisher	*In the Middle of the Night*
Robert McCloskey	*Make Way for Ducklings*
Wanda Gag	*Millions of Cats*
Nonny Hogrogian	*One Fine Day*
Marie Hall Ets	*Gilberto and the Wind*

Is this book too difficult for my child?

Once your child begins to read on his own, there are several ways for you to tell if a book is written on a level that he can understand. The first thing to do is to look carefully at the reading books your child is using at school. This will give you an idea of the kind of vocabulary and sentence structure needed for a given age group and grade. Also, many books for young readers specify the age or grade level for which they are intended; you can look at some of the books in your bookstore to see which ones are suitable.

Here is a procedure you can follow to decide if your child can handle a book you've found at your library or bookstore. Have the child read a page of the book to you. Count the number of words on which he hesitates or stumbles, or which he can't make out at all. If only one or two words pose problems, the book matches the child's skills and he can probably handle it with little help from you. If there are three or four words your child doesn't know, the book may still be all right, especially if it's on a subject of particular interest. Even so, you should help him read it the first time. When you find that one page has as many as five words that cause problems for a first- or second-grader, the book is too hard and will probably frustrate him if he tries to read it on his own. However, if the difficult book is on a subject of high interest to your child, you might want to read it to him, or have him read it along with you. After your child gets to the third grade, you may allow a few more troublesome words per page when he's first reading a book. Should you decide to do this, watch for signs that he's having trouble with entire sentences because he's struggling with many of the individual words.

Books in specific areas of interest

By the time a child gets to the third or fourth grade, he not only gains a certain amount of reading skill but also develops interest in a variety of subjects. In *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading,* Nancy Larrick provides the following list of topics of interest to children. The list is included here to suggest subjects you may want to investigate with your child. Titles in these topic areas can be found in the Larrick book. Other possibilities are suggested later in this chapter.

Favorite Books for Boys and Girls

Nursery Rhymes and Picture Books
Easy-to-Read Books
Folk Tales, Fairy Tales, Fables, and Legends
Modern Stories—Real and Fantastic
History—Fact and Fiction
Problems Children Face
Science and Nature
Fun with Magic
Riddles, Jokes, and Nonsense
Poetry
Song Books

Another excellent source of information on children's literature is Charlotte S. Huck's *Children's Literature in the Elementary School.* This is a large volume which you may wish to use selectively. Here are seven major kinds of books for children with some examples. These types of books and numerous others are discussed in Huck.

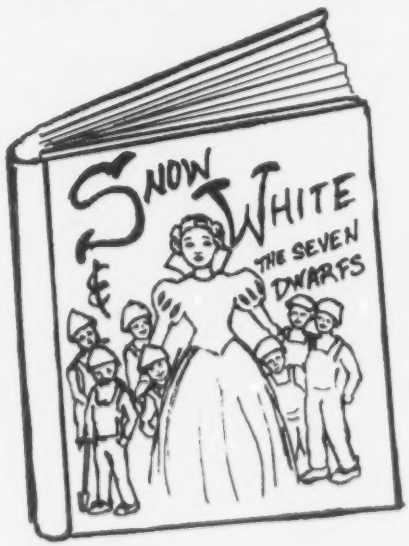
Picture books

These are the first books your child encounters. Some of the favorites in this category are listed here:

- Mother Goose stories and nursery rhymes (all available in a number of versions, with lots of pictures)
- Books about the alphabet, such as Bernice Chardiet's *C Is for Circus* or Wanda Gag's *The ABC Bunny*
- Counting books, including *1, 2, 3 to the Zoo* by Eric Carle and *Count and See* by Tana Hoban
- Books that help children understand concepts, such as Margaret Wise Brown's *The Important Book* and Miriam Schlein's *Fast Is Not a Ladybug* and *Heavy Is a Hippopotamus.*
- Wordless picture books, including *The Adventures of Paddy Pork* by John S. Goodall and books by Mercer Mayer such as *A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog*

In addition to the examples just mentioned, there are many books with words and pictures designed specifically for beginning readers. Some popular books of this type contain illustrated versions of Aesop's Fables, such as the one adapted by Louis Untermeyer and illustrated by A. and M. Provenson for Golden Press. Other favorites are by these authors:

- Margaret Wise Brown: *Home for a Bunny; The Sleepy Lion*
- The Brothers Grimm: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,* translated by Randall Jarrell, illustrated by Nancy Burkert for Farrar, Strauss
- Ezra Jack Keats: *Hi, Cat!* and *Whistle for Willie*
- Leo Lionni: *Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse* and *Frederick*
- Dr. Seuss: *The Cat in the Hat* and *Horton Hatches the Egg*



Traditional literature

Some of the leading books in this collection are folk tales from different countries, notably those written by Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm. Some others are Marcia Brown's telling of the English story *Dick Whittington and His Cat* and the French tale *Stone Soup;* Paul Galdone's group of English stories including *The Little Red Hen, The Three Bears,* and *The Three Little Pigs;* and the well-known stories by Charles Perrault (*Cinderella; Little Red Riding Hood; Puss in Boots;* and *Sleeping Beauty*, for example).

There are many versions of the Grimm stories, translated and illustrated by such authors as Wanda Gag and Maurice Sendak. Other types of traditional literature include the fables of Aesop (available in many different versions) and of La Fontaine (such as *The Fables of La Fontaine*, adapted and illustrated by Richard Scarry). Many collections of myths and epics are also available, including these:

- Roger L. Green's *A Book of Myths, The Myths of the Norsemen, tales of Ancient Egypt,* and *Tales of the Greek Heroes*
- Barbara Leonie Picard's *The Iliad of Homer, The Odyssey of Homer Retold,* and *Stories of King Arthur and His Knights*
- Howard Pyle's *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*

Modern fantasy

Books of this kind cover a wide range of possibilities, from stories that can be read to (or by) young children to science fiction for children in upper elementary and middle school. Michael Bond's stories about Paddington Bear (*A Bear Called Paddington* and *More About Paddington)* are especially good for children in the first or second grade. Other books that appeal to young children are these:

- Beverly Cleary's *The Mouse and the Motorcycle* and *Runaway Ralph.*
- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl.
- *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame.
- Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories.*
- *A Wrinkle in Time* and *A Wind in the Door* by Madeleine L'Engle.
- Astrid Lundgren's *Pippi Longstocking.*
- *The Cricket in Times Square* by George Selden.

Poetry

Poetry offers endless possibilities for getting a child interested in what language can do. Whether in the form of simple Mother Goose rhymes or more complex poems for older children, the value of poetry in expanding and developing your child's appreciation of words and his ability to use them is enormous. Younger children enjoy the repetitive words and steady rhythms of the simplest poems. Rhyme can also be an attractive element, but it's not found in all poems.

Children like narrative poems very much (in the same way they're interested in finding out "what happens next" in stories), and they also like limericks, the funnier and more ridiculous the better. Children of all ages relish poems with a little humor in them, as well as poems that deal with familiar experiences and animals. Also, children prefer poems using today's language and situations over more traditional poems.

Some of the many collections of children's poetry:

✧ *Poems and Verses about Animals; Poems and Verses about the City;* and *Poems and Verses to Begin On,* all edited by Donald J. Bissett.

✧ *The Golden Journey,* a collection of poetry for young people compiled by Louise Bogan and William Jay Smith.

✧ *Christmas Bells Are Ringing* and *Laughable Limericks,* compiled by Sarah and John E. Brewton.

✧ John Ciardi's *I Met a Man* and *You Read to Me, I'll Read to You* (good examples of narrative poems);

✧ The many volumes of poetry compiled by William Cole, such as *The Birds and the Beasts Were There; A Book of Animal Poems; Humorous Poetry for Children; Poems for Seasons and Celebrations;* and *Story Poems, New and Old.*

Contemporary realistic fiction

This group includes books about growing up and living with others, dealing with problems (for instance, physical handicaps, aging and death), and living in a society of many racial ethnic and religious backgrounds. It also includes such topics of interest as animals, humor, sports and mysteries. Some of the most well-known books of this type are listed here:

✧ John Ciardi's *I Met a Man* and *You Read to Me, I'll Read to You* (good examples of narrative poems);

✧ *It's Not the End of the World; Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing;* and many other popular stories by Judy Blume

✧ *The Black Stallion* by Walter Farley

✧ *Harriet the Spy* by Louise Fitzhugh

✧ *Misty of Chincoteague* and *Stormy, Misty's Foal* by Marguerite Henry

✧ *Lassie Come Home* by Eric Knight

✧ *Go, Team, Go!* and *Keystone Kids* by John R. Tunis

Historical fiction

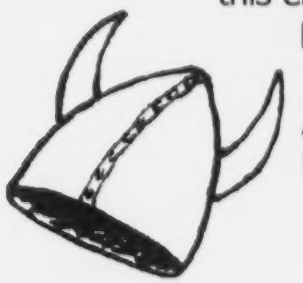
Books in this group may deal with subjects from prehistoric times, the Old World (Egypt, Rome, Viking adventures), the New World (Indians, colonial times, the frontier, the Civil War), and events and scientific developments of the twentieth century (such as the world wars and space exploration).

✧ Some good examples of stories about prehistoric peoples are *One Small Blue Bead* by Byrd Baylor Schweitzer; *Beyond the Gorge of Shadows* by James Harvey; and *And the Waters Prevailed* by D. Moreau Barringer.

✧ Stories of ancient times include *Mara, Daughter of the Nile* and *The Golden Goblet* by Eloise McGraw; *I Marched with Hannibal* by Hans Baumann; and *The Dancing Bear* by Peter Dickinson.

✧ Tales of Viking deeds are told in Henry Treece's trilogy *Viking's Dawn, The Road to Middlegaard,* and *Viking's Sunset.*

✧ Children of seven or eight will probably be able to read Clyde R. Bulla's story of medieval adventure, *The Sword in the Tree.* Other stories about this era include *Candle at Dusk* by E. M. Almedignen, *The Door in the Wall* by Marguerite de Angeli, and *One Is One* by Barbara Leonie Picard.



The development of America is a subject that provides many interesting stories, such as:

✧ Stories of colonial America include *Thanksgiving Story* by Alice Dalgliesh, *The First Year* by Enid Meadowcroft, and *I Sailed on the Mayflower* by Roger Pilkington.

✧ Fortunately, more recent stories about Native Americans no longer portray them as bloodthirsty savages. Some of the better children's books about American Indians are *Moccasin Trail* by Eloise McGraw, *Sing Down the Moon* by Scott O'Dell, and *Only the Earth and the Sky Last Forever* by Nathaniel Benchley.

✧ There are many books about the American frontier, and these are of great interest to young children. The nine *Little House* books by Laura Ingalls Wilder are very popular, partly because of the television show based on the stories, which can now be viewed in reruns. Others dealing with this period are *Caroline and Her Kettle Named Maud* by Miriam E. Mason, *Bread and Butter Journey* by Anne Colver, and *White Bird* by Clyde Bulla. Many other historical stories about the Civil War and later times can be found.

Remember, whether you're looking for historically based books or titles in any category, you can check the children's section of the library. Most libraries have computers that can search by subject, title, author and even keyword.

Informational books and biography

Children also enjoy nonfiction books. Here are a few examples of these books grouped by topics.

Concept books

Shapes and Things by Tana Hoban
A Map Is a Picture by Barbara Rinkoff
How Far Is Far? by Alvin Tresselt
What Makes Me Feel This Way? by Eda LeShan

Informational picture books

Charlie Needs a Cloak by Tomie DePaola
Elizabeth Gets Well by Alfons Weber
Clay Sings by Byrd Baylor
The series of nine *This Is . . .* books by Miroslav Sasek (*This Is Australia, This Is Greece, This Is London,* etc.)

Photographic essays

How Kittens Grow by Millicent Selsam
Don't Feel Sorry for Paul by Bernard Wolf
Zaire: A Week in Joseph's World by Eliot Elisofon

Life-cycle animal books

The Mother Owl; The Mother Beaver; The Mother Whale; The Mother Deer; all by Edith and Clement Hurd
Man of the Mississippi and *Pagoo* by Holling C. Holling
Screamer, Last of the Eastern Panthers and *Thor, Last of the Sperm Whales* by Robert McClung

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Survey books

The Doubleday Nature Encyclopedia, edited by Angela Sheehan

The Many Faces of Man by Sharon S. McKern

George Washington's World; Abraham Lincoln's World; The World of Columbus and Sons; and others of the same type by Genevieve Foster.

There are many biographies available for young learners, from simple ones written for beginners to more detailed ones for children in the upper grades. Some of these are listed below.

Willie Mays by George Sullivan

Abraham Lincoln; George Washington; and *Christopher Columbus*, all by Clara Judson

The One Bad Thing about Father (a biography of Theodore Roosevelt told from the point of view of his son Quentin)

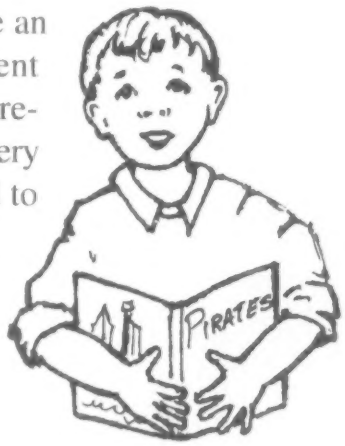
Me and Willie and Pa, The Story of Abraham Lincoln and His Son Ted by F. N. Monjo.

Among the many biographies are those about recent personalities from sports, the arts, and other fields, as well as stories about figures of the more distant past.

Books for different ages

It may seem simplistic to list books for each age of childhood, but the experiences of teachers and librarians indicate that as children's language and experience change, there are books that satisfy those age-related needs. Parents should always be alert, too, to the personal interests of their children. Following are age categories with some examples of books that fit each age.

Ages 6–7



Children at this age continue an interest in language development and strive to meet some adult requests for skills. Point of view is very personal, yet they want the good to win and the bad to be punished.

Adkins, Jan. *How a House Happens.*
Ahlberg, Janet and Allan. *Each Peach Pear Plum.*
Aliki. *Feelings.*
_____. *Green Grass and White Milk.*
_____. *How a Book Is Made.*
_____. *A Weed Is a Flower.*
Ardizzone, Edward. *Tim to the Rescue.*
Aruego, Jose. *Look What I Can Do.*
Bishop, Claire Huchet and Kurt Weise. *The Five Chinese Brothers.*
Caines, Jeanette. *Just Us Women.*
Cameron, Ann. *The Stories Julian Tells.*
Cole, Joanna. *The Magic Schoolbus at the Waterworks.*
_____. *My Puppy Is Born.*
Conford, Ellen. *Impossible, Possum.*

Cummings, Pat. *Clean Your Room, Harvey Moon.*
Dalgliesh, Alice. *The Bears on Hemlock Mountain.*
Duvoisin, Roger. *Petunia the Silly Goose Stories.*
Flack, Marjorie. *Walter and the Lazy Mouse.*
Freeman, Don. *Dandelion.*
Fuchs, Erich. *Journey to the Moon.*
Gill, Joan. *Hush Jon!*
Ginsburg, Mirra. *Mushroom in the Rain.*
Gable, Paul. *The Gift of the Sacred Dog.*
Golden, Augusta. *Ducks Don't Get Wet.*
Gomi, Taro. *Spring Is Here.*
Gray, Nigel. *A Country Far Away.*
Gross, Theodore Faro. *Everyone Asked about You.*
Guilfoile, Elizabeth. *Nobody Listens to Andrew*
Havill, Juanita. *Jamaica Find.*
Heide, Florence Parry and Judith Heide Gilliard. *The Day of Ahmed's Secret.*
Hill, Elizabeth Starr. *Evan's Corner.*
Hoban, Tana. *Look Again!*
Hutchins, Pat. *Clocks and More Clocks.*
_____. *The Surprise Party.*
Johnson, Angela. *Tell Me a Story, Mama.*
Keats, Ezra Jack. *Whistle for Willie.*
Koren, Edward. *Behind the Wheel.*
Kraus, Robert. *Leo the Late Bloomer.*
Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad Together.*
McCloskey, Robert. *Time of Wonder.*
McFarland, Cynthia. *Cows in the Parlor.*
Peters, Lisa Westberg. *Water's Way.*
Reyher, Rebecca. *My Mother Is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World.*
Rockwell, Anne F. *Olly's Polliwogs.*
Rothman, Joel and Argentina Palacios. *This Can Lick a Lollipop.*

Rylant, Cynthia. *Henry and Mudge and the Bedtime Thumps.*
Scott, Ann Herbert. *Sam.*
Segal, Lore Groszmann. *Tell Me a Mitzi.*
Shaw, Charles. *It Looked Like Spilt Milk.*
Silverstein, Alvin. *Guinea Pigs, All about Them.*
Steig, William. *Amos and Boris.*
Steptoe, John. *Stevie.*
_____. *Train Ride.*
Taylor, Mark. *Henry the Explorer.*
Tolstoy, Aleksey Nikolayevich. *The Great Big Enormous Turnip.*
Tresselt, Alvin R. *A Thousand Lights and Fireflies.*
_____. *Wake Up, City.*
Turkle, Brinton. *Obadiah the Bold.*
Udry, Janice. *Let's Be Enemies.*
Waters, Kate and Madeline Slovenz-Low. *Lion Dancer.*
Yabuuchi, Masayuki. *Whose Footprints?*
Yashima, Taro. *Crow Boy.*
Yoshida, Toshi. *Young Lions.*
Zemach, Harve. *The Judge.*
Zolotow, Charlotte. *Do You Know What I'll Do?*
_____. *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present.*

Ages 8-9

By ages 8 and 9, children have gained considerable independence in reading and are becoming conscious of others around them. They are more likely to see the viewpoints of others and to like slapstick humor.

Alexander, Sally Hobart. *Mom Can't See Me.*
Ancona, George. *Turtle Watch.*
Arnosky, Jim. *I Was Born in a Tree and Raised by Bees.*
Baylor, Byrd. *The Best Town in the World.*
Beatty, Jerome. *Bob Fulton's Amazing Soda Pop Stretcher.*
Belpre, Pura. *The Rainbow-Colored Horse.*
Bernstein, Margery and Janet Kobrin. *The Summer Maker.*
Blume, Judy. *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing.*
Bryan, Ashley. *The Cat's Purr.*
Burch, Robert. *Queenie Peavy.*
Burleigh, Robert. *A Man Named Thoreau.*
Butterworth, Oliver. *The Enormous Egg.*
Dahl, Roald. *James and the Giant Peach.*
De Jong, Meindert. *Far Out the Long Canal.*
_____. *Home, Candy.*
Enright, Elizabeth. *Gone-Away Lake.*
Epstein, Sam. *First Book of Codes and Ciphers.*
Epstein, Sam and Beryl. *Jackpot of the Beagle Brigade.*
Fitzhugh, Louise. *Harriet, the Spy.*
Fox, Paula. *How Many Miles to Babylon?*
_____. *Maurice's Room.*
Fritz, Jean. *The Cabin Faced West.*
_____. *Shh! We're Writing the Constitution.*
Garelick, May. *What Makes a Bird a Bird?*
Gibbons, Gail. *Beacons of Light.*
Giff, Patricia Reilly. *Laura Ingalls Wilder: Growing Up in the Little House.*
Gable, Paul. *Her Seven Brothers.*
Goldsmith, Diane Hoyt. *Pueblo Storyteller.*
Green, Constance C. *The Unmaking of Rabbit.*
Hamilton, Virginia. *Zeely.*
Hicks, Clifford B. *Alvin's Secret Code.*
Howe, James. *Morgan's Zoo.*

Hunter, Edith Fisher. *Child of the Silent Night.*
Key, Alexander. *The Forgotten Door.*
Lexau, Joan M. *Striped Ice Cream.*
Lionni, Leo. *Swimmy.*
Little, Jean. *Take Wing.*
MacLachlan, Patricia. *Seven Kisses in a Row.*
McGovern, Ann. *Runaway Slave: The Story of Harriet Tubman.*
McKee, David. *Mr. Benn; Red Knight.*
Miles, Miska. *Annie and the Old One.*
Murray, Michele. *Nellie Cameron.*
Peare, Catherine Owens. *The Helen Keller Story.*
Ryder, Joanne. *White Bear, Ice Bear.*
Schulz, Charles. *Snoopy and His Sopwith Camel.*
Slobodkin, Florence. *Sarah Somebody.*
Steel, William O. *Winter Danger.*
Stolz, Mary. *The Bully of Barkham* Street.
Turkle, Brinton. *The Fiddler of High Lonesome.*
Walter, Mildred Pitts. *Ty's One-Man Band.*
Warburg, Sandol Stoddard. *Growing Time.*
National Wildlife Federation. *What Do Animals See, Hear, Smell, and Feel?*
White, E. B. *Charlotte's Web.*
Yolen, Jane. *The Emperor and the Kite.*

Ages 10-12

During this age range, most girls reach pubescence and both sexes become interested in personal identity, body development, and relations between the sexes. Family issues and parental control begin to come to mind, as do jobs, hobbies, and the broad world outside their neighborhood.

Armstrong, William. *Sounder.*
Blume, Judy. *Then Again, Maybe I Won't.*

Byars, Betsy. *The Summer of the Swans.*
Carruth, Ella Kaiser. *She Wanted to Read: The Story of Mary McLeod Bethune.*
Christopher, John. *The City of Gold and Lead.*
Clymer, Eleanor Lowenton. *My Brother Stevie.*
Donovan, John. *I'll Get There—It Better Be Worth the Trip.*
Embury, Barbara. *The Dream Is Alive: A Flight of Discovery Aboard the Space Shuttle.*
Engdahl, Sylvia Louise. *Enchantress from the Stars.*
Farmer, Penelope. *The Summer Birds.*
Fox, Paula. *One-Eyed Cat.*
Franchere, Ruth. Willa: *The Story of Willa Cather's Growing Up.*
Frank, Anne. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl.*
Freedman, Russell. *The Wright Brothers.*
George, Jean Craighead. *Julie of the Wolves.*
_____. *Water Sky.*
Goldreich, Gloria. *What Can She Be? A Lawyer.*
Goor, Ron and Nancy. *Insect Metamorphosis.*
Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan. *The Painter's Eye: Learning to Look at Contemporary American Art.*
Green, Constance C. *A Girl Called Al.*
Hamilton, Virginia. *The Mystery of Drear House.*
Henry, Marguerite. *Black Gold.*
Hitchcock, Alfred. *Alfred Hitchcock's Daring Detectives.*
Hunt, Irene. *Across Five Aprils.*
Jones, Weyman B. *Edge of Two Worlds.*
Keegan, Marcia. *Pueblo Boy.*
Kidder, Harvey. *Illustrated Chess for Children.*
Kroeber, Theodora. *Ishi, Last of His Tribe.*
L'Engle, Madeleine. *The Moon by Night.*
Lester, Julius. *To Be a Slave.*
Lewis, C. S. *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader.*

Mann, Peggy. *My Dad Lives in a Downtown Hotel.*
McHargue, Georgess. *Funny Bananas: The Mystery in the Museum.*
McKissack, Patricia C. *Mary McLeod Bethune.*
Meltzer, Milton. *Mary McLeod Bethune: Voice of Black Hope.*
Mollel, Tololwa M. *The Orphan Boy.*
Neville, Emily Cheney. *Berries Goodman.*
_____. *It's Like This, Cat.*
Nixon, Joan Lowry. *A Family Apart.*
O'Dell, Scott. *Black Star, Bright Dawn.*
Paulsen, Gary. *The River.*
Peck, Robert Newton. *A Day No Pigs Would Die.*
Perl, Lila. *The Great Ancestor Hunt.*
Picard, Barbara Leonie. *One Is One.*
Radowski, Colby. *Sydney, Herself.*
Ravielli, Anthony. *Wonders of the Human Body.*
Robinson, Jackie. *Breakthrough to the Big League.*
Robinson, Veronica. *David in Silence.*
Rodgers, Mary. *Freaky Friday.*
Rodriguez, Consuelo. *Cesar Chavez.*
Ross, Frank Xavier. *Racing Cars and Great Races.*
Siebert, Diane. *Mojave.*
Simon, Seymour. *101 Questions and Answers about Dangerous Animals.*
_____. *The Secret Clocks: Time Sense of Living Things.*
Smith, Doris Buchanan. *A Taste of Blackberries.*
Southall, Ivan. *Josh.*
Stanley, Diane and Peter Vennema. *Shaka: King of the Zulus.*
Steele, Mary Q. *Journey Outside.*
Taylor, Mildred. *The Road to Memphis.*
Tunis, John Roberts. *His Enemy, His Friend.*
Uchida, Yoshiko. *The Happiest Ending.*

_____. *Journey Home.*
_____. *Journey to Topaz.*
Voigt, Cynthia. *Homecoming.*
Walker, Paul Robert. *The Pride of Puerto Rico: The Life of Roberto Clemente.*
Wersba, Barbara. *The Dream Watcher.*
Whitfield, Dr. Philip. *Can the Whales Be Saved? Questions about the Natural World and the Threats to Its Survival.*
Wier, Ester. *The Loner.*
Wojciechowska, Maia. *Shadow of a Bull.*
Yep, Laurence. *The Lost Garden.*

Expanding your child's interests

Tracking your child's reading

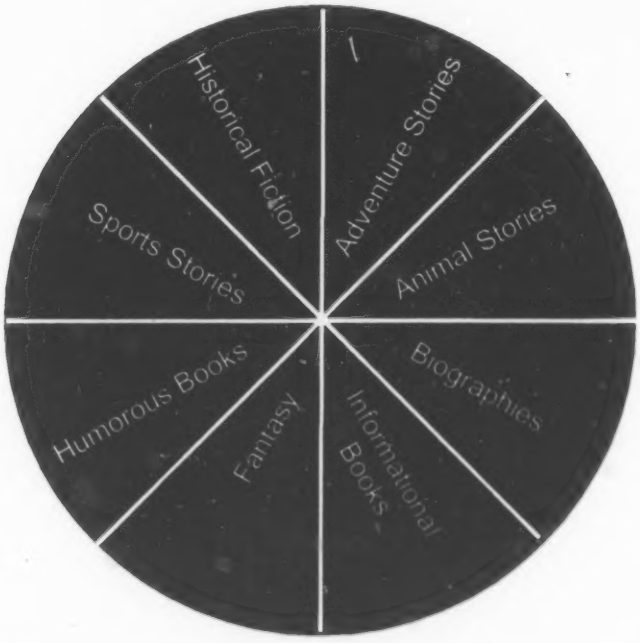
You may find it useful to keep track of the books that your child chooses to read. With a little prompting, older children can do this on their own. Younger ones can copy down the names of the books, or write their own names on a title card attached to the books they read. If you want to make a display to put on the refrigerator or in your child's room, make a book caterpillar. Cut out equal circles on which your child can write the titles of books read. Tape each new circle to the previous one and everyone can watch the book caterpillar grow.

Any recording method you set up can give you an idea of what kind of reading your child is doing. If the list shows that your child is reading all of one kind of material, you will probably want to introduce some other types. A chart like the one below is helpful in promoting varied reading.

Using a pie chart to keep track of reading

Directions: Write the titles of the books your child reads in the spaces below. Write the identification number for each book inside the pie chart, putting the number into the topic "slice" which best describes the book.

Author	Title	Date
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		



Dealing with a narrow approach to reading

Children often seem to latch on to one kind of book. For example, they may choose only nonfiction books about rocks and minerals because they "want to learn something" when they read. That's fine. You certainly don't want to argue against an interest in learning, even if it is a bit narrow. You can point out to older children that they can learn about human nature from fiction, though that may be a little abstract for a younger child. It's usually better to try to expand reading interests through more subtle means.

In dealing with the child who only wants to read about rocks, you might point out other nonfiction books with a focus on plants or animals. Next, you could pick up a biography about a famous scientist. Perhaps you could page through the biography and make comments about events that might interest your child. Maybe she'll pick it up and read more. Science fiction might also be a natural step in the expansion of her reading interests.

Unfortunately, some children may simply refuse to read at all. The very worst thing to do if this happens is to threaten them or force them to read. The best way to address the problem is to help the child succeed by offering attractive books and by reading together. Ask your child's teacher or librarian for their advice if you have this problem at home.

High interest books and quick-read books are especially important for a parent dealing with a child who won't read. Many easy-to-read books are now available on a variety of topics, allowing you to find titles on "grown-up" subjects such as space flight and avoid books that an older child may think are only for "little kids."

Again, the key to helping children who don't like to read is to lead them to success in reading. Children who have problems with reading will continue to need help, even with easy books. You can lend a hand just by taking the time to read with your child.

Resources for learning and reading

As we've suggested throughout this book, your local public library is one of the best places to go when you want to help your child advance in reading. To get an idea of the variety of books available for children, talk to the librarian, search the computer's database, or just browse the shelves of the children's section. Other useful information can be found in the books listed on pages 55–73.

Summary

✧ Even if your child is too young to read, you can encourage him to become interested in books by reading to him.

✧ There are many resources to guide parents as they select books. (See pages 55–73)

✧ If your child only wants to read one kind of book, try to widen his interests by bringing home books on other subjects.

✧ Children's interests typically change from age to age; so do their reading levels. An age-related book list can help you open new opportunities for your child.

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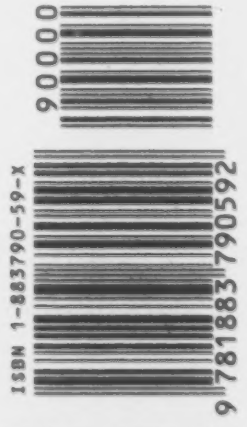

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